

SPOKANE RIVER REGIONAL TOXICS TASK FORCE FUNDING REQUEST LETTER

Dear Governor Inslee:

This letter is sent on behalf of the Spokane River Regional Toxics Task Force (SRRTTF) requesting your support by including a funding proviso for the SRRTTF in the amount of \$800,000 into the Governor's budget for the 2019 - 2021 biennium. This funding is to be used for the SRRTTF's top priorities and promotes the most significant and effective PCB reduction efforts in our watershed, which the SRRTTF stands ready to implement under its Comprehensive Plan.

The Department of Ecology (Ecology) has chosen this innovative process to bring all stakeholders together in a collaborative effort to address water quality concerns in the Spokane River. The SRRTTF represents municipal and industrial dischargers, conservation and environmental interests, and state and federal regulatory agencies. This "direct- to-implementation" narrative approach has the support of both Ecology and EPA as an alternative plan to the more formal Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL) process which would likely be more time consuming, expensive, delay water quality improvements, and negatively impact NPDES permittees and the Spokane community.

The purpose of the SRRTTF is to "work collaboratively to characterize the sources of toxics in the Spokane River and identify and implement appropriate actions needed to make measurable progress towards meeting applicable water quality standards for the State of Washington, State of Idaho, and The Spokane Tribe of Indians and in the interests of public and environmental health." This is a complicated and multifaceted issue with no simple solution, but the SRRTTF is dedicated to this collaborative process that will continue to result in a reduction of toxics to the Spokane River.

A report from Ecology shows that the SRRTTF has made measurable progress toward identifying, reducing and controlling PCBs and related toxic chemicals in the Spokane River. The report concludes that "the Spokane River Regional Toxics Task Force has removed 265 pounds of PCBs from soil, wastewater and stormwater, and eliminated the potential for another 18 pounds from reaching the river." The past success of the SRRTTF has been possible largely as a result of state funding, which was matched by private dollars. As the SRRTTF leans more towards the implementation of control actions, continued progress depends upon direct funding of its efforts.

Funding for the 2016 – 2018 biennium has resulted in additional reductions of toxics in our watershed. We continue to reduce PCBs through improvements to municipal and industrial wastewater and stormwater systems, and the SRRTTF has driven the adoption of local and statewide purchasing standards that prohibit the use of yellow road paint known to contain PCBs. We are also addressing Green Chemistry alternatives, nationwide, with the manufacturers of PCB-containing inks and dyes that are legally produced under the Toxics Substances Control Act (TSCA). Companies such as Hewlett-Packard have adopted policies that set a procurement specification for inadvertently generated PCBs in their products at 0.1 ppm, substantially lower than the 50 ppm allowable under federal regulations. The Spokane watershed continues to set a nationwide precedent in addressing and removing PCBs from our waterways.



The SRRTTF continues to implement the primary measures identified in the SRRTTF's Comprehensive Plan. In addition to our ongoing work, we will be initiating a study to better understand the elevated levels of PCBs found in fish in the Spokane River and the location of probable sources. The SRRTTF is also currently identifying available and viable options for inks and pigments and plans to engage stakeholders in manufacturing and downstream supply chains (packaging and newsprint users) in the adoption of safer lower PCB alternatives.

Our request is that you support an \$800,000 biennium budget proposal to continue the progress that has been achieved in the Spokane River. Continued funding supports our innovative consensus-based process that has resulted in large dividends for our region through the effective and efficient use of resources to address both existing and future environmental challenges.

Thank you very much for your support.